

A
SERMON
ON
AMERICAN SLAVERY:
ITS NATURE,
AND THE
DUTIES OF CHRISTIANS
IN RELATION TO IT.

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(ADVERTISEMENT.)

TO GEO. DUFFIELD:

DEAR SIR—The undersigned, coinciding in the general scope of the views recently expressed by you, in two discourses on the subject of Slavery, and highly appreciating the candour and impartiality with which the subject was treated, and believing that the publication of those discourses would tend to promote just and rational views in the community, and to supply something approximating at least, to a safe and practicable rule of conduct for honest and ingenuous minds, upon an important and exciting subject, respectfully ask your consent to the publication of said discourses, and take pleasure in availing themselves of this occasion to express to you assurances of their high regard, and wishes for your prolonged usefulness and happiness.

GEO. E. HAND,
LEVI COOK,
E. P. HASTINGS,
E. BINGHAM,
JOHN PALMER,
DOUGLASS HOUGHTON,
J. M. HOWARD.

SHUBAEL CONANT,
A. SHELEY,
D. G. JONES,
H. HALLOCK,
H. HOWARD,
ROBERT STUART,
JOHN WINDER.

Detroit, Dec. 23, 1839.

TO GEO. E. HAND, SHUBAEL CONANT, LEVI COOK, and others,

GENTLEMEN:—In reply to your request, communicated yesterday, for a copy of the discourses recently delivered in the Presbyterian Church in this city, on the subject of American Slavery, I beg leave to say, that they were not originally prepared for publication, but were designed to promote the spirit of philanthropy, and harmony of feeling and action, among the members of my congregation and others of this community, who both love their country and feel for their suffering and degraded fellow creatures. If you think they will be useful to these ends they are at your disposal, just as they were delivered. For the sentiments and feelings you express in relation to myself, accept my grateful acknowledgments, and my assurances of the sincere regard with which I have the honor to subscribe myself in relation to you, gentlemen, both collectively and severally,

Your friend and humble serv't,

GEO. DUFFIELD.

Detroit, Jan. 4, 1840.

AMERICAN SLAVERY.

Prov. 24. 11, 12. "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain: If thou sayest behold we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth the soul doth he not know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?"

I have selected this passage, from the sacred scriptures, as the foundation of some remarks on the subject of *American Slavery, and the duties of christians in relation to it.*

The request recently made by a large number of the male members of this church and congregation, all of whom I highly esteem and respect, but whose views, on some points connected with this question, and whose motives for desiring me to unfold my own, are very different—has subjected me to some embarrassment. That embarrassment arises from various sources. Such an expression of confidence increases the pressure of responsibility. The subject in itself is very exciting. The discussion of it has frequently proved disastrous to important social interests, and individual usefulness. Instances are not wanting where it has entirely destroyed the balance of the mind, effectually transformed the character, and totally ruined the ministerial usefulness of some, who allowed the subject to usurp a chief or prominent place in their thoughts and pulpit ministrations:—yea, where it has led to the renunciation of the ministerial character and office, and to the utter overthrow and dispersion of a church, whose members, instead of following the things "which make for peace, and whereby they may edify one another," have become zealous to revile each other, and by their uncharitable and angry contentions and denunciations, have both brought reproach on the religion of Jesus, and displaced irretrievably, the confidence once reposed in their piety.

Beside its intrinsic power to excite, it has become connected with so many political, ecclesiastical, and party interests and prejudices, as to render it very difficult to bring the sober and unbiassed judgment to consider any question to which it gives rise. There are so many

shoals and quick sands, rocks and whirl-pools, through which we have to steer, when adventuring on this sea, where sudden tempests are so apt to arise, and the most boisterous and stormy winds of passion prevail, that the cautious mariner, to whom is entrusted the precious cargo of immortal souls, may well feel himself embarrassed, and urged to the utmost anxiety and watchfulness, lest he make shipwreck of the barque confided to him.

The differing views, and even conflicting motives, which have united in one common request for some thoughts on this subject, from me, were alone sufficient to produce embarrassment, even though, as in this case, the mind had long since, and apart from all party predilections, investigated the subject, and arrived at its own conclusions. It is not, however, from this source that our chief embarrassment proceeds. On the contrary, this rather operates to disembarrass, and leaves but the fear we may not treat the subject with that entire candour and freedom from prejudice and party feeling, which such an expression of confidence, let alone the intrinsic importance of the subject, merits. It is the general perplexity attending this subject—the crowd of difficult and dangerous questions, both in casuistry and politics, which must be encountered, to do it justice, which chiefly affects us. We are persuaded, therefore, that in asking from you the reciprocation of that candour and divestment of the mind of prejudice, with which we ourselves approach the subject, we make but a reasonable request, and one with which you will promptly comply, while we notice, as preliminary to the main question, some of the embarrassments which cluster around this subject.

It were perfectly idle to pretend that the great question of AMERICAN SLAVERY is one which presents itself, as do most others of public and private morality. Whatever right the pulpit possesses to reprove, rebuke, exhort, and entreat, in relation to every moral duty, and to every offence against the laws of God; whatever is the bold and magnanimous independence, which, on all such points, it is bound to maintain; one thing is certain, the subject has become so involved and complicated, that, without the greatest care, it is almost impossible for the pulpit to keep within its legitimate sphere, or, at least, to avoid misapprehension, when it opens its doors for the discussion. There are considerations which so involve the general subject, and produce such a sensitiveness, and tendency to indulge passion rather than reason, on the part of the public mind, that they who do agitate it, should both be very careful to discriminate, and feel themselves urged to treat it in a man-

ner correspondent with the solemnity with which these considerations invest it.

The recognition of slavery has been interwoven in the Constitution of these United States ; and although it has been done in a very covert and delicate manner, yet a large portion of our citizens feel that in that document, the people of the several confederated States, by fixing the ratio of slave representation, have given to each other a pledge for its continuance, at least till the respective States in which it exists, shall themselves abolish it. Hence some feel, that to agitate the question of emancipation, except in some specific mode suggested and urged for the alteration of the Constitution, as that instrument itself provides for such alterations, is to violate the obligation of good citizens and the faith of compacts, to manifest hostility against the Union, and to set at naught their sacred responsibilities who have bound themselves by oath to support it. Fallacious as are such impressions and deductions, it contributes not a little to confirm them, and to increase the difficulty and intricacy of the subject, that some conspicuous advocates of immediate emancipation, have not only denounced and defamed the Constitution, but spoken in such objurgatory strains as to make the impression, falsely no doubt, that they sought, and would rejoice in its destruction. Hence they have been stigmatized as disorganizers, as recreant to their country's honor and welfare, and as guilty of moral treason. Thus the salutary influence, which otherwise, their sound arguments and solemn appeals, and general character, might have had on the judgments and consciences of many, who now will not hear any thing from them, has been utterly ruined.

Moreover, the preservation and perpetuation of slavery have marked the policy of the southern States, who claim it, as one of their own peculiar social and domestic institutions, with which none have a right to interfere but themselves. Their minds being prepossessed with this idea, and feeling, that with themselves rests exclusively the constitutional right and power to emancipate, they have become irascible, and totally misapprehended the design of those who have zealously advocated the obligation and necessity of immediate emancipation. It is greatly to be regretted that here too, in urging the claims of the poor slave, some have dealt in generals and failed to discriminate, while others have attempted to put such a forced construction on the constitution, as would intimate a design to wrest from the hands of the southern States, what they have heretofore taken it for granted none would deny—their own exclusive right to emancipate. Hence have been en-

gendered, and fostered, the most violent sectional prejudices, which have made many, over whom it is important to exert a salutary influence, close their ears and turn away, refusing to allow the subject even to be named in their hearing.

Nor does the embarrassment pertaining to this subject cease here. It has become the pretext and occasion for the organization of political parties, for resorting to the polls rather than to the power of reason, to the genius of christianity and the moral force of truth. The peculiar rights and obligations of citizens, who constitute the sovereign power in this government, do indeed involve responsibilities in relation to this and other moral questions, which cannot but affect the conscience of every enlightened christian patriot. But the strifes and conflicts of political parties, the wide theatre for intrigue and corruption they furnish—the readiness of designing politicians, in their canvassings and plans for a political campaign, to make use of the prejudices and even the consciences of sectaries and others, whose moral principles are known, have rendered it exceedingly difficult to introduce the subject into the pulpit, without occasion being taken to throw odium on it for having debased itself for electioneering purposes. Hence some, who have felt that the moral aspect of the question required the notice of him who has it in charge to shew unto men their transgressions, have become bewildered, and intimidated by the political aspect the discussion has assumed, and by the political measures contemplated and announced by certain partizan advocates of immediate emancipation.

The most unreasonable and uncontrollable prejudices too, have been excited and armed by the manner in which the subject has been often presented. The fervent eloquence of youthful and even of more aged friends of liberty and equality, has not always been free from the spirit of denunciation, and the abundant use of epithets unnecessarily irritating. Nor has there been that important distinction always recognised between slavery, viewed abstractly in all its evil attributes, and the slaveholder placed in circumstances serving to modify and diminish the turpitude of the sin, in a thousand special cases. Hence some advocates of emancipation have been pronounced defamers, libellers, and fanatics, whose hearts were very far from cherishing the angry and vindictive feelings their language was supposed to imply. This want of distinguishing carefully between the sin and the sinner, and which has led to the use of epithets and invectives equally applicable to both, has moreover excited the terror of some involved in the evils of slavery, and led them most erroneously to denounce and dread the friends

of immediate emancipation, as the veriest incendiaries, and instigators of insurrection, who designed, and would delight, to shout the war-hoop, and to urge the phrenzied slave, thirsting for his master's blood, to deeds of revenge, even of arson and murder.

A further source of embarrassment pertaining to this subject, and that by no means an unfruitful one, is found in the relations of business and interest which bind together a large portion of the slaveholding and non-slaveholding population of these United States. Any change is feared by some, lest there should be a falling off in the production of the staple commodities of the south; lest also scenes of confusion and convulsion should occur, which might and would extend and embarrass the free labourer at the north; and lest former profitable and desirable business intercourse and relations should be broken up. The very agitation of the question therefore excites alarm, awakens the interested feelings of many, and induces prompt, decisive and often violent efforts to resist the very first movement, which either looks towards a change, or might possibly disturb and jeopard a lucrative business.

The influence of the press too, to a very wide extent increases embarrassment. We are far from charging the numerous editors, who denounce the advocates of immediate emancipation as fanatics and enemies to their country, with malignant feelings and designs; but the pure patriotism and unblemished reputation of many, both in the church and state, who have lifted their voice in favor of immediate emancipation, certainly entitle them to more respect, and their principles to a fuller and more candid investigation, than they have been wont to receive. Beside the groundless fear of exciting an insurrectionary and turbulent spirit, by anti-slavery doctrines among the slaves, is no reason why this spirit should be elicited in our free states, and the advocates of freedom and humanity be made the first victims of a lawless, inflamed and insurrectionary mob. Nor is it at all becoming, in those who should be the guides as well as the index of public opinion, to draw false inferences from phrases, and to charge on the friends of immediate emancipation, the absurd and ridiculous, as well as alarming design of seeking to turn three millions of human creatures loose, in the midst of us, to roam abroad as vagrants, or pilgrims, or beggars, or adventurers, without any means of support. It is always ungenerous and unjust to charge on men as their opinion, inferences which they disavow, and which do not flow legitimately from their principles, however easy it may be to pervert their language, and give false definitions to their

terms. Yet to this the recklessness of many presses has contributed.

Hence the fears of some of our more staid and sober citizens have been excited, suspicions entertained, and even charges made, that those who agitate the subject are plotting moral treason, and design to sever the bond which unites the northern and southern States of this great confederacy. However gratuitous these are, and entirely without foundation, yet they have their influence, and just as the great charter of our liberties is prized, and the bonds which unite these free and independent States are cherished, do many turn away with unutterable aversion from every allusion to this subject.

Nor is it the least source of embarrassment, under which this subject labours, that grave and reverend doctors, wise and learned instructors of our youth, have resorted to fallacious modes of reasoning, and even to the sacred scriptures, to justify, or at least to palliate the continuance of slavery. President Wayland has constructed an elaborate argument to prove that notwithstanding the admitted immorality of slavery, we, as "citizens of the United States, have no more to do with it than we have with the affairs of Iceland," because we are a copartnership for certain specified purposes, among which this is not enumerated, and therefore, having no power over it, we have no responsibility, and consequently no obligations to discharge, but may "wash our hands of it, inasmuch as it is a matter which the providence of God has never placed within our jurisdiction,"—nay more, that we have actually bound ourselves by solemn promise, "*to let it alone.*"—Wayland's *Limitations of Human responsibility*, pp. 171—3.

Admitting the correctness of the illustration, which however we are far from doing, we should think that even a child might see the conclusion to be much wider than the premises. A partner in a concern may discern some imperfection in the compact, may feel that the principles on which the business is conducted are wrong, and wish to have them better defined, and the business placed on a better foundation;—who will say, that in such a case, while he cannot change the compact, or control the business without the consent of all the parties, i. e. can take no legal steps in the premises, he may nevertheless exercise his natural and inalienable right to endeavour, if possible, to convince his fellow partners of the wrong, and bring them with full consent to make the changes he may desire? Yet this right of expressing his opinion, and seeking by appropriate arguments and appeals, to influence the slaveholder to give up the system of slavery, and substitute that of freedom, is what both the letter and spirit of the eloquent President's argu-

ment deny. And it is the more surprising, because in the very next breath he admits that the citizen of the United States, by virtue of his humanity is "specially called upon" to attempt the removal of slavery," "because," as he says, "it is an evil existing in our own neighbourhood, and a wrong done by our friends and acquaintances." "We have a right," says he, "to attempt to change southern opinions on this question, and to show the master, by argument, that it is for his interest, and that it is his duty, to liberate his slave." Such fallacious and inconsistent modes of reasoning can do nothing but embarrass the whole subject.

Scarcely less, yea rather even more embarrassing is the learned argument of Dr. Spring, of New York, who, having affirmed that slavery existed from earliest antiquity, and was found in the world when Moses established his code, and when Christ and his apostles preached in Jerusalem, without shewing the different forms of servitude in different nations, but virtually and infinitely wide from the truth, identifying that species in the Hebrew, with what obtains in the American commonwealth, and noticing the particular provisions of the Mosaic law on the subject, intimates the conclusion, in reference to American slavery, that the *abuses* of the system, and not *the system itself*, are to be directly condemned, and that for any change we must look to the spirit and principles of christianity, which will so modify the whole system as to give a death blow to all its abuses, and remove it ultimately, by gradually meliorating its character—a thing by the way which never yet has been done. The influence and weight of such authority cannot but be felt extensively. Nor can they fail to give countenance, in the minds of many, to the arguments which had been previously published by Dr. Hodge, a theological professor in Princeton, and certain divines at the south, that the bible is strictly and properly a pro-slavery book, and that slavery, not even excepting the American form of it, is one of the domestic and social institutions which God has recognised and approved. Even ecclesiastical bodies, unlike those of former days, have undertaken the defence of the system, instead of lamenting its evils, a remarkable example of which has occurred within the present year in the reply of the Presbytery of Tombecbee, Miss., to the general conference of the congregational churches in Maine, who have repeated Dr. Spring's argument, and assuming the identity of the servitude in Abraham's family—which however was that of a military corps or a company of herdsmen—and in the Hebrew commonwealth, with American slavery, have cited numerous passages of the scriptures referring to the former in support and vindication of the latter.

It is in view of these, and other embarrassments, under which the subject labours, that we feel how difficult it is to approach it, and so to handle it as to prevent misapprehension. Even the advocates of immediate emancipation have in some instances unnecessarily, and we think both wantonly and censurably, increased that embarrassment, by avowing their design to bring the power of voluntary associations, and what politically would be called the system of drilling, to bear upon ministers and churches who will not adopt *their* measures; and for the purpose of forcing both to co-operate with them, threatening, in case they would not adopt their measures to carry a war of extermination into the midst of them—proclaiming it better to rend and destroy such churches as would not come up to their standard. Yet in the midst of all, the cry of the oppressed ceaseth not, and the evils of the system are not diminished. To be entirely silent would not be compatible with the obligations which God, in his providence, has devolved upon his churches. Are there no duties which christians are bound to discharge in this matter? Or have the numerous embarrassments which crowd around it completely exonerated them from all obligations? With the political phases of the subject, we wish not to intermeddle, being perfectly convinced, that if our politicians and statesmen at the south be made to see that it is injurious to the common weal and can be safely abandoned, there is abundant wisdom among them to devise the plan, and to enact the statutes, which may be requisite in the several States, to meet and provide for all the changes which emancipation must produce. The experiment has been successfully made in our own northern States, in Mexico, in the West Indies, and in South America, so that there are abundant precedents and ample experience to guide the minds of our wise men and Legislatures, whenever they will consent to look at and act in this matter. The best method and regulations for this purpose, the different anomalous cases, the varied conditions and circumstances of the slave population, the interests of the landed estates, of the owners of slaves, of society, of public morals, and numerous provisions for the protection, improvement, domestication, and civilization of the slaves, with kindred topics, demand calm and grave discussion, and are appropriate to our political and philanthropical journals, to our more weighty and influential periodicals, and to the halls of our Legislative assemblies where the evil exists. Candid and temperate discussion, sober and laborious investigation, statistical details and researches necessary for sound and safe legislation, are due from the official guardians of the public weal, and from the statesmen, civilians, and

others whose professions are more conversant with the science and business of government. The pulpit is the guardian of still higher interests : and the time and labours of the ministers of Christ are wholly misapplied, if they—whose great and sole commission is by preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, to strive to secure the emancipation of sinners of every grade and condition, from the bondage of their sins—should be occupied with matters strictly governmental and political, however desirable and important for the general interests of society may be the discussions, investigations, and legislation they require.

It is the moral aspect of the subject, and the duties of christians in relation to it, which pertain more appropriately to the pulpit ; but to present these without trespassing on other ground, has not always been found an easy duty. We have therefore brought into view the embarrassments, in fact, under which the subject labours, to bespeak, not only your candid attention and confidence, but also that deep and solemn consideration which it behooves every christian, every friend of his country, and every friend of poor oppressed humanity to give this subject. The time allotted to the morning's exercise having thus been consumed, by an attempt to present distinctly the topic that will claim your attention this afternoon, we defer till then what we wish to say on this subject. In the mean time, we cannot omit one or two suggestions here.

The first is, how vastly important it is to guard against the spirit of party, or any other spirit which might teach us to prejudge erroneously, in a case where all the calmness and candour which the love of country, the love of truth, and the love of Jesus can inspire, are necessary. To bring the spirit of party and party tactics to bear, for the commitment of persons who have not soberly examined and pondered the subject well, is alike reprehensible in church and state. We have abundant cause of thankfulness that the spirit of freedom yet exists among us, and that nothing but brutal violence can be brought to bear against free discussion, unless it be the machinery of parizan organizations. As we love our free institutions, as we love our country, as we love our liberty, and as we love our common humanity, we should cherish our rights, and guard most carefully against wantonly resigning them; or suffering them to be wrested from our hands; and for this purpose should think, inquire, reflect, and judge for ourselves, in view of the full merits of the case, and under a pressing sense of our personal responsibilities.

Another remark we suggest, is the immense importance of being actuated by a proper and christian spirit in this, as well as every other

matter. It is impossible that any great question such as this, involving so many and such complicated interests, and liable to be so easily misapprehended, can be agitated, without producing more or less of excitement. The excitement of heated and impetuous passion is always dangerous. The only effectual guard against this, is the cultivation of the meek and gentle spirit of Jesus Christ. To be free from danger here, we should be deeply imbued with the spirit of benevolence, which while it will start the tear of pity for the wretched slave, will produce commiseration also for the still more wretched slaveholder. Both have immortal souls, and the religion of Jesus requires not the sacrifice of the one for the other. We must breathe the spirit of good will to all men, and labour as far as possible, to promote the happiness and salvation of all. Every thing which looks like derision and scorn, contempt and vindictiveness, is essentially at war with the spirit of the gospel. However offensive and formidable may be the evils of slavery, however we may deplore their existence, and however ruinous it may be to our country's peace and prosperity, and to the souls of men, we have no right to arm ourselves with the vengeance of God, or to resort to any violence to bring it to an end. He has not put into our hands a sword to be bathed in blood: nor commissioned us to scatter "fire brands, arrows and death" in this guilty world.* Vengeance belongeth unto Him: He will repay. And the certainty and prospect of that coming vengeance should make us feel more deeply for, and commiserate more sincerely and tenderly, the condition of those who may be exposing themselves to it. It behooves us to put on "bowels of compassion" here, and to take the example of our blessed Lord and master, who never attempted, by one act of violence, or one indication of vindictiveness, to reform the vices which abounded in his day. His tears, his sorrows, his counsels, his prayers, the breathings of an heart overflowing with love to God, and love to man, which knew no bounds but our wretched race—these were the means by which He sought to reform and save.

Finally, I would remark that however deeply our feelings may be interested for the slave, and however we may feel ourselves urged to plead for him both with god and man, yet is there a much more frightful and degrading slavery, which is ruining the souls of hundreds and thousands of our friends, neighbours and acquaintances, for whom I

* These are the principles which the great body of the friends of immediate emancipation, with whom we are acquainted, adopt and avow, notwithstanding the intemperate and abusive language of some whose religious creed involves the very same principles, has made very extensively a contrary impression.

would bespeak your tender compassion. How many are the slaves of intemperance, sensuality, and various degrading vices, which are destroying both soul and body! How many are led captives by the devil at his will, and must, if not soon emancipated from his tyranny, forever perish! Let their immediate emancipation be an object of your anxious and prayerful efforts, and while you think of, and long for the deliverance of the poor African—oh remember the poor sinner who is laden with guilt, lashed by his conscience, loathed by his God, and in danger at any moment of being utterly and eternally destroyed by the vengeance of incensed Heaven.

SERMON.

Prov. 24, 11, 12. "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest behold we knew it not, doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it?—and he that keepeth the soul doth he not know it?—and shall not he render to every man according to his works?"

The text clearly teaches that it is criminal in us to withhold our sympathy and efforts to benefit and deliver the oppressed, whose lives and happiness hang in doubt about them. No plea of ignorance will excuse our indifference, where we have it in our power to rescue the captives doomed to suffer an unjust punishment; but God, who searches the heart, and can make a proper estimate of our guilt, will requite us accordingly. Dr. Schultens, a very learned German critic of the last century, remarks on this passage—"The public religion and the public safety requires us to rescue those who are subjected to unjust punishment. It is necessary the lightnings of divine wrath should strike the country where such a thing is tolerated,—where, at least, they connive at and are silent in reference to such a thing." He also quotes the remark of an earlier critic, who thinks that the proverb refers to those who being taken captive by free-booters and robbers, are doomed to death unless they are redeemed.

It is believed by many, that the spirit of the proverb, and the principles it involves, are equally applicable to the system of AMERICAN SLAVERY. Whether or not, will be better understood, when we shall have investigated its character, and the duties of christians in relation to it, which is the design of the present discourse.

On the former part of the day, we detailed some of the numerous embarrassments under which the pulpit labours when it undertakes to discuss this subject; and having attempted to discriminate between the political and moral aspects, so as to prevent misapprehension, proposed to submit some remarks on the moral character of American Slavery, and the duties of christians in reference to it.

In estimating both, it is necessary to know what constitutes the essential features of that slavery which obtains in this country. We exposed, in the morning, the fallacy of that mode of reasoning which would justify, or at least excuse, American Slavery, by including it among the different forms of servitude recognised and sanctioned in the sacred scriptures. A further remark here may be proper.

It is admitted freely that human society, at least in the present condition of human nature, cannot subsist in a state of civilization without one part consenting to do certain menial services for the other. Who shall or shall not, must be left free to the parties to arrange among themselves, unless we deny the natural equality of mankind. Because one man is rich, and chooses not to perform manual labour and menial services, or because he thinks he can employ his time to more advantage by getting others to do them for him, that is no reason why he should seize the poor man, and compel him to become his servant.—Wealth does not give him any natural right which the poor man has not in common with him. The poor and the rich equally possess the unalienable rights to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” But the poor man, in the exercise of these rights, may find it as conducive to his life and happiness to labour and to render service for the rich, as the rich man does to employ him. This, where liberty obtains, must ever be left to the parties, by mutual consent and agreement, to arrange between themselves. To call this servitude slavery, is to abuse language; and to class it with American slavery is to insult and trifle with the feelings of the honest freeman. Nor could it ever be done we think, but by those whose attachment, or respect for slavery, had engendered the spirit of pride and led them to look contemptuously on the poor man’s condition, or, whose prejudices and predilections had so warped their judgment that they could not see the essential and infinite difference between a degraded slave and an honest freeman—the one toiling for a master, the other for himself. The whole system of labour by freemen for wages, commonly called help, hired servants, is as wide from that of slavery as the east is from the west; and to class them together, as is often done in reasoning upon this subject, seems to us to imply some obliquity, either of the head or of the heart.

Nor will we except the system of apprenticeship, as it obtains in the free States, from these remarks. The parent, who has the guardianship, education, and support of his child devolved on him by providence, may find it more conducive to the child’s interest and happiness in life, to transfer his responsibilities as a parent—which circumstances

may prevent him from meeting as fully as he could wish—to another person, who, in consideration of the youth's deferring to his authority and direction, will teach him his art, or trade, and educate and qualify him better to help himself, when he shall have reached legal manhood, than he could have been had he continued with his parent. This is but the arrangement, which the parent, the natural guardian of the child, makes for his education and support during the period of his minority. To call this form of servitude slavery, and to class them together, is perfectly inadmissible, on any principle of sound reasoning or sound morality. As well might you class the obligations of filial obedience with slavery, and thus outrage the moral sense of the whole community. It is true, that abuses may be cited pertaining to the apprenticeship system, and it is possible, that the condition of many a slave, the object of his master's kindness, so far as being fed, clothed, kindly spoken to, provided for, and educated, are concerned, may be preferable to that of some poor friendless and oppressed apprentice. There are cases also, of monstrous and brutal abuse in the filial relation, and here and there a child may be found, who would gladly, so far as kind treatment is concerned, exchange condition with some favoured slave; but the *abuses* are not our guide in estimating the character of the *system*. They are, and ought to be, in estimating the character of the *persons* who avail themselves of the operation of the system. The system itself must be estimated by the laws and usages of society, which give it shape and character. The apprentice and the child have the protection of the law, and can make their appeal to it when abused. Society throws its arms around them, and cherishes and protects them, as a portion of itself. Not so with slavery. Its laws and usages are framed entirely on other principles. The slave forms no part of civil society; and shares not its fostering care and protection, any further than the interest or affection of the owner, and the unextinguished feelings of humanity, may prompt. He is regarded and judged to be a chattel or a thing—a beast of labour; and his condition is determined, not by the essential relations and unalienable rights of humanity, nor by the ties of blood and kindred and affection, but by the laws framed for the preservation and protection of the master's interest and property.

That we have not taken an erroneous view of the nature of American slavery, the following quotations from the statute books of the southern states will prove. The civil code of Louisiana defines a slave to be "one who is in the power of a master to whom he belongs. The master may sell him, dispose of his person; his industry, and his labor:

he can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire any thing, but what must belong to his master."—Civil Code, Art. 35. "The slave is *entirely* subject to the *will* of his master."—Idem Art. 173. In South Carolina the law ordains that "slaves shall be deemed, sold, taken, reputed, judged in law, to be chattels personal, in the hands of their owners and possessors, and their executors, administrators, and assigns, to *all intents, constructions and purposes whatever*."—2 Brevard's Dig. 229. Prince's Digest, 446. Judge Stroud in his sketch of slave laws says: "The cardinal principle of slavery, *that the slave is not to be ranked among sentient beings, but among things*—is an article of property, a chattel personal,—obtains as undoubted law in all of these the slave States."—Id. p. 22, 23. The slave has no rights. "He cannot be a party to a civil suit."—Id. p. 76. He cannot be a party before a judicial tribunal, in any species of action against his master, no matter how atrocious may have been the injury which he has received from him.—Id. 57. "He cannot contest the title of the person claiming him as a slave."—Wheeler's law of slavery, p. 199. "Whilst in a state of slavery, marriage cannot produce any civil effect, because slaves are deprived of all civil rights."—Id. p. 197. "A slave cannot be a witness against a white person" in any case whatever, even though the deed may have been murder.—Stroud's sketch of the laws of slavery, p. 65. "Our slaves," says Wheeler's law of slavery, "can do nothing in their own right; can hold no property; can neither buy, sell or barter, or dispose of any thing without express permission from their master or owner. A slave is in absolute bondage. He has no civil right, and can hold no property except at the will of his master, and all his rights and acquisitions, and services, are in the hands of his master."—p. 6. A slave cannot make a contract—even the marriage contract between them is null and void, and the law recognises no more crime in fornication, adultery bigamy, and incest among them, than it does among the brutes."—See Maryland Reports, p. 561, 3. "One general principle," says Wheeler's law of slavery, p. 160, "predominates in all the slave States, and that is, that a slave cannot make a contract, not even a contract of matrimony."

We are not animadverting on the legislation of the south. Were this our object, it could be shown simply from the slave code, that a slave may be killed by moderate correction, and that in Georgia for striking a white person the second time, and in South Carolina the third time, he may be put to death.—Princes Dig. 450, Stroud, 97.—that in Virginia a slave is liable to death for near 70 crimes, for which a

white man is not thus punished.—Paxton's Letters p. 5, in Mississippi about 50, in South Carolina about 36,—that they are not allowed to be educated—that private attempts to do so, and to afford moral and religious instruction, may be punished,—that they are allowed no society, and severely punished for attempting to seek it—and that they are overworked, ill-fed both as to quantity and quality, not well or sufficiently clothed, and subjected to shocking and barbarous punishments.

That the humanity of slaveholders, in many instances, mitigates the severity of the law, we rejoice to believe; and that not a few groan over the evils incident to the wretched condition of the slaves, and would gladly see the system abandoned, we have no doubt. But who that knows the endless variety of human passion, and the natural ferocity and brutality of some, does not see, that where the master is made absolute proprietor of his slave, and cannot be prosecuted at law by his slave, or convicted on the testimony of any slave, he has it in his power to indulge in the most atrocious tyranny and to gratify the malignant and brutal passions by which he may be swayed?

In making our estimate of the character of American slavery, we attend not to what is said about brutal treatment on the one hand, or kind and christian treatment on the other. These things, as we have said, are of importance in special cases, in estimating the character and moral turpitude, or degree of criminality of this and the other person who holds slaves, and we think ought always to be regarded so as to prevent indiscriminate and equal condemnation of individuals. We look entirely and exclusively to the slave system, as defined and set forth in the statute books of the southern States. It is the creature of positive law. "It is incapable of being introduced on any reasons, moral or political, but only by positive law; and it is so odious that nothing else can be suffered to support it." It is in the statute book we trace the lineaments of its character.

It is here—to the portrait of American slavery, as exhibited in the legislation of the southern States, that we look. The features here drawn are so essentially different from that of the servitude recognised and authorised by the laws of Moses, that we are astonished any man should think of even comparing them. The Jewish law scrupulously protected the servant, as a part of society—one among the great mass of intelligent creatures possessing rights in common with his fellow men—as a moral and responsible agent. This remark we deem unnecessary to confirm by minute examination of the Jewish code, which code we think can be demonstrated to be essentially and irreconcilably

at war with slavery,—itself a system of emancipation—a wise and admirable interposition of society for protecting the person and defining the rights of those who might be employed to perform labour, and to do the menial services in the Hebrew commonwealth. It will be sufficient merely to quote the judgment of Dr. Spring on this subject, whose partialities and predilections in favour of abolitionism cannot for a moment be suspected. He says distinctly, and most correctly, that “while the Jewish code recognise the right of the master to the possession of the servant, it recognizes no rights that are inconsistent with the high nature of his being, but is itself the guardian of every right, founded on his obligations as a moral and responsible agent, to God or his fellow men.” “I cannot help thinking,” he adds, “that the system of servitude under the laws of Moses, so far as it regarded slaves who were themselves Hebrews, was not unlike the system of apprenticeship in Great Britain, and in this country, where a child is bound out for a term of years, and at the end of that period the parent receives a stipulated compensation for his services.”—Dis. p. 231, 2.

And yet, with singular inconsistency, he classes the apprenticeship of the sons of our northern freemen, with the slavery in our southern States, in which there is not one common feature—between which there is not one trace of resemblance.

It is true, a distinction is made between servants, from among the native Hebrews, and from the heathen round about, or the stranger sojourning in the land; and it is urged, that the law of jubilee, which cancelled all bonds and restored him to liberty who had sold his own time, or by his parents had been apprenticed, applied only to the native Hebrew, whereas it was expressly provided in relation to the heathen, and the children of strangers sojourning among them, “ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession, they shall be your bond-men *forever*.”—Lev. 25. 46. The design of this law however is not to provide, that the jubilee should not apply to the servants from heathen nations, and strangers in Israel: for the law of the semi-centenary jubilee expressly ordained, that they should “proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto *all the inhabitants thereof*.”—Lev. 25, 10. The object of the law about heathen servants was to restrict the apprenticeship system to them, and to prevent any other system of servitude being practiced in relation to the native Hebrew, but that of hiring from year to year, or at most to the septenary jubilee.—Lev. 25, 40. When it is said of the children of strangers, “they shall be your bond-men *forever*,” the idea is not that they should hold

them in perpetual slavery, as some allege, directly in opposition to the letter and spirit of the law of jubilee; but that the ordinance which restricted the apprenticeship system to the heathen and strangers was to be forever inviolate. It makes every difference in the world, whether we understand the word forever to apply to the ordinance or to the servitude. The law of Jubilee and the whole connection shows it is the statute and not the servitude which was to be forever.

This feature of perpetuity therefore being proved wanting, there is nothing in the Jewish code that can even be compared with American slavery; and consequently, it is not only a perversion of the sacred scriptures, but also of sound logic, to plead the apprenticeship system of the Jews in justification of the perpetual slavery of our southern States, as some of our learned professors and divines have done.

Equally fallacious is the attempt to elaim the sanction of the scriptures for American slavery, from the manner in which the subject is referred to in the New Testament. It is true, that the slavery practised among the ancient Greeks and Romans, and which obtained in the bounds of the Roman Empire, during the days of Christ and his apostles, was of a much sterner and severer character than the apprenticeship system of the Jewish code. And it is also true, that there were converts made to christianity among the slaves of that day, for whose benefit certain instructions and counsel are found in the writings of the apostles. But these cannot be cited in proof that christianity approves of, or allows the system of slavery. It does not indeed dictate to magistrates, and the political authorities, enjoining it on them to repeal their slave laws, or on the people to rise up in rebellion and resist their execution. Neither does it dictate the form of civil government, and prescribe to men the institutions of democracy, though it began its course at a time when the most violent and cruel forms of despotism existed. It would be just as logical to infer, because of its silence in reference to the political institutions of the day, that it approved of the despotism of Nero, as of the old Roman or American slaveholder. It arrayed not itself directly against any of the political institutions. It did not even commence a direct and hostile attack upon the different forms of idolatry prevalent in that day, as that idolatry was established or protected by law. Nor did it make war directly upon the concubinage and polygamy which were recognized among the social and domestic institutions of the different nations to which it came. Neither did it forbid games, plays, gladiator shows, and attack directly the Bacchanalian, Saturnalian, Eleusynian, or any other system of corrupt

ing rites and mysteries. Will any one therefore infer that it approved of and allowed idolatry, concubinage, polygamy, and the cruel sports and polluting rites of idolators, because it did not array itself directly against the legislation of the country? By no means: for it laid down maxims, inculcated doctrines, made known the true God, and so breathed and urged the spirit of purity and benevolence, that no one could mistake or be at a loss to understand whether these things were or were not to be countenanced by its advocates and friends. It was just so with slavery. So far as its political bearing was concerned, and the laws of the land were in favour of it, Christ and his apostles attempted and instigated no sedition, but they delivered such precepts and so administered their counsels as to shew plainly, that the religion they inculcated was wholly incompatible with it.

It is enjoined that "as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."—Deut. 6, 51. We are to have reference to the interests and happiness of others in prosecuting our own, and not treat them as we would be unwilling to be treated ourselves. "Look not every man on his own things but every man also on the things of others."

And as to the apostles judgment it is distinctly given; for the New Testament classes slavery among the crimes of cruelty and oppression, which are practised among men. "For ye suffer it," says Paul, "if a man bring you into bondage, (hold you ens'aved) if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man smite you in the face."—2 Cor. 11, 20. Here, to be held in bondage, is placed first among the crimes of cruelty, such as spoiling, buffeting, and the like. Yet are christians exhorted to take these things patiently. Does it therefore follow that they who did these things committed no sin? Every one sees at once the fallacy of such a conclusion.

Equally inconclusive is it to say, that because the apostles enjoined it on servants to be obedient to their masters, and masters to discharge their correlate duties, therefore they justified either Roman or American slavery. If there was no other form of servitude but slavery, then this conclusion would be tenable:—but the relations of hireling, and apprenticeship, and other forms of natural or voluntary dependence, in which originate such obligations, are as wide from slavery as the north is from the south.

Besides the precepts in the new Testament requiring obedience from servants, are so qualified as to shew plainly, that to the master was not conceded the right of absolute control. There were rights and obliga-

tions in which he shared in common with his servant, and which were adjusted by the same law, not the positive law of the State, but the moral law of God. "Masters give to your servants what is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a master in Heaven."—Col. 4, 1. Here is the limit put to their authority. Servants are exhorted "to obey their masters *in all things*," not absolutely, but the limitation of their obedience is also added, "with fear and trembling" &c., with tenderness of conscience, a trembling sensitiveness to evil, since their obedience to their masters must be, it is added, "in singleness of their heart, as unto Christ." The new Testament does not enjoin it on servants to render an unqualified obedience to their masters, but that only which they could "in singleness of their heart as unto Christ:" for it explains, "not with eye service, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, *doing the will of God* from the heart, with good will doing service *as to the Lord*, and not to men." With the same limitations all other injunctions addressed to servants requiring their obedience must be understood. Such reciprocal obligations, proclaimed and urged in the new Testament, are totally subversive of the whole system of slavery. Whatever claim the positive law may set up for the right of absolute authority by masters—which the apostles and new Testament did not condescend even to notice—the moral law, by their exposition and application of its great principle of loving our neighbour as ourself, was shewn to be utterly at war with, and if allowed to operate, subversive of the whole system of slavery. And this has been the history of christianity.

There is yet another plea in support of the system of slavery, attempted to be urged from the New Testament, which is just as inconclusive as those already noticed. The apostle, it is said, in exhorting christians to contentment, and to submission under the dispensations of Providence, gives it as a general rule, that they should abide in the condition or calling in which they were converted, and applies it to the case of servants. "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called, being a servant care not for it."—1 Cor. 7. This however is no sanction of slavery. It is kind counsel, given to promote the contentment of those, whose condition was determined by a necessity they could not control—that is all. For, so far from approving or allowing of slavery, he adds directly, "but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather," and then lays down the general rule on the subject, that both master and servant are alike under common obligations, and stand on common ground as christians. "For," says

he, "he that is called in the Lord, being a servant is the Lord's free man: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant." A state of slavery the apostle plainly taught was inconsistent with the rights and obligations of christians, and therefore laid it down as the general rule, "ye are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men." His object was to prevent any thing like insurrection, or violence, or idleness, or discontent in one converted who was a servant, and who might and would infer that he was held unrighteously in bonds; but at the same time he intimated most distinctly, that a state of slavery being in general inconsistent with his christian character and duties, he should if it were practicable, seek his freedom. If his servitude however was not inconsistent with a life of piety—with a walk with God, then he might remain in it if he chose. "Brethren," said he, "let every man wherein he is called therein *abide with God*." But if they could not do this, if it was inconsistent with a walk with God, then they should seek their freedom. The apostle, in this context evidently intended to apply the old Jewish principle of freedom and self respect to the subject of slavery, so far as the christian character is concerned, for he quotes the very language, of the Mosaic statute, which ordained that an Israelite should not be a slave. "For to me," God had said and enacted the "children of Israel are servants; they are my servants whom I brought out of Egypt; they shall not be as bondmen." Take the whole context into view, and it is perfectly plain that the apostle considered the case of the slave a hard one, and one as a general thing inconsistent with christianity, and from which he should not be freed, but that where a christian slave might have a pagan master who would not give him his liberty, in that case he should not act violently, but submit to his hard lot, as far as in doing so he could keep a good conscience, and serve and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. We want no stronger or more decided testimony against either Roman or American slavery, as being inconsistent with christianity, than this very context. It is going just as far as it was possible to go, without attacking the legislation of the country, and without rousing the slave to deeds of violence and insurrection, wholly incompatible with christianity.

So it was understood; and so it operated in the primitive church. There are passages in the writings of the fathers which breathe the same spirit of freedom and love of liberty which actuated Paul, and which betray their deep solicitude that others should enjoy it.

"The churches of Armida not only raised all the money they could, but sold the plate and furniture of their churches, and redeemed 7,000

Persians who were offered for sale by the Romans, and set them free and sent them home to their people." The primitive christians were accustomed, it is said, to take up collections weekly, and apply them to redeem persons from slavery, and especially their brethren. Their kindness to the poor was so notorious, that Julian ascribed their success in spreading the gospel mainly to it. This gave them great favour with the lower classes, many of whom were in slavery."—Paxton's Letters, p. 123.

The case of Philemon is precisely in point, and the example set forth in Paul's epistle to him, one which it is surprising should have ever been mistaken. In that epistle, Paul entreats Philemon to receive Onesimus, probably a runaway slave, who had been converted in the same prison where Paul was confined, and to give him his liberty, and to cancel all his obligations, promising, if he should require it, to hold himself responsible for any debt he owed him, or injury done him. At the same time, he lets Philemon know distinctly that what he sought from him as a favour, he might have been "much bold in Christ to enjoin" on him as a duty.

From all therefore which has been said, we can be at no loss to determine the character of American slavery; and that, take it as a system defined and guarded by the laws of the southern States, it is equally condemned by the law of God, and the spirit and precepts of the gospel. I have not thought it proper to notice the tendency and results of the system, nor the innumerable physical, intellectual, moral, social and political evils which cluster around it; but have confined my attention to its leading features, as portrayed in the statute book. What can be said of a system which gives to one man absolute authority over another—which denies all rights to one and confers all power on another—which makes man, created in the image of God, a mere personal chattel or thing—which destroys all social and domestic relations and ties—which obliterates the marriage contract—which sets aside the obligations between parents and children—which brutalizes the human species—which withdraws the restraints alike of human and divine law from the intercourse of the sexes, virtually legalizing fornication, adultery, incest, and all manner of abominations—which condemns human beings to be fed and provided for as cattle—which prevents them from the acquisition and possession of property—which dooms them to ignorance and the deepest degradation—which lacerates the flesh and sensibilities—which oppresses with barbarous punishments—which makes them curse the day of their birth—and which causes them often

to prefer strangling and death rather than life,—what I ask, can we say of such a system, but that it is “evil, only evil, and that continually”?

We cannot trust ourselves to speak of its moral character as illustrated by its fruits. On this point we defer to the judgment of slaveholders themselves, and close up our argument with the testimony of Thos. Jefferson, who says: “The *whole commerce* between master and slave, is a *perpetual exercise* of the most *boisterous passions*—the most unremitting *despotism* on the one part, and degrading submission on the other. The parent *storms*, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of *wrath*, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives loose to the worst of *passions*, and thus *nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny*, cannot but be stamped by it with *odious peculiarities*.”—Notes on Va. p. 251.

The character of American slavery being thus determined, the question as to what are the duties of christians in relation to it, can be more readily answered. On this point we shall detain you but a few moments.

It is clearly the duty of every christian man to *condemn the system*, and to beware how he does any thing directly or indirectly to sanction or perpetuate it. We cannot approve of, and allow that which is morally evil, especially where we have power to prevent it, without making ourselves partakers of the guilt. This is too obvious to need confirmation. But the question of duty comes back in another form—are we under obligations to do any thing to get rid of the system? On this point some differ in their opinions. Viewed abstractly every one will admit, that whatever can be done, consistently with other and correlate obligations, ought to be done, by all who are actuated by any thing like a public spirit, and not drowned in their own selfishness. But can any thing be done? The following things are certainly practicable and pertinent.

The southern States can, if they choose, as others have done, emancipate their slaves on their own soil, without subjecting them to the necessity of escaping to the free States to become, as is often the case, a wretched and corrupt race. At present, fears are entertained that emancipation on the soil, giving liberty to slaveholders to set their slaves free, and retain them as free laborers, instead of requiring them to quit the States, would only be to raise a dangerous population, who might tamper with the slaves and instigate and lead them to deeds of insurrection and murder. Hence, embarrassments are crowded in the way of

emancipation at the south, and fears are entertained at the north, that just as emancipation at the south increases shall the north be inundated with vagrant mendicants. But should all be emancipated together, and the law provide a proper system of guardianship, and allow them to remain as free laborers, to be employed for wages, as by law provided and protected, all would be free together, and this danger avoided; nor would the temptation to insurrection any longer exist, when they would find, that they were not to be driven from their native country, but would be allowed to marry, to keep their families about them, to acquire property, and seek their temporal, moral and intellectual improvement. Should it be feared that immediate universal emancipation in any one or all of the States, would be to produce inextricable confusion, and to cast a floating population of some millions abroad in a helpless, starving, roaming, predatory condition, it may be replied, this has not been the history of emancipation. The confusion incident to a great and sudden change like this, has always been much less than was feared, when the emancipated were allowed to remain on the soil, and become free laborers protected by law. The apprenticeship system has worked badly, but the other has not, and in proof of this we refer to the whole history of emancipation, in Mexico, in Colombia, in Bolivia, in the West Indies, not even excepting St. Domingo, where the massacre and bloodshed was produced, not by immediate emancipation, for the slaves had been free about seven years before, but by Napoleon's attempt to reduce them back to slavery, after they had enjoyed the sweets of liberty. The experiment has been made, and made successfully in other places, and there is no reason why it may not be repeated with equal success and safety in our southern States. Immediate emancipation on the soil, according to the laws wisely drawn up, and adapted to introduce a system of free labor on the plantations from those now enslaved, would diminish the migration to the northern States, rather than increase it, and would at the same time, except in some peculiar anomalous cases, which might be provided for by legislation, be no destruction of property; for if the planter could have the laborer on the soil by his own consent, as he might have, it would save him from the necessity of advancing and keeping a large capital in the purchase and maintenance of slaves to do his labor. The sovereign right, however, thus to act rests entirely in the southern States, and all that christians or freemen at the north can do to bring about such a result, is to try by suitable arguments, influence and appeals, to induce the people of the south to imitate the successful examples of emancipation in other places.

As it regards the mode of exerting that influence there may be differences of opinion ; but I see no reason why there should be any angry strife between abolitionist and colonizationist, or northern and southern christians. The gospel of Christ will guide us safely here, and the following things are certain : Unless the people of the south can be induced to emancipate, all that we at the north or any where else can do, will fail. What then is the best mode of influencing the people of the south ? We have none other than the force of our testimony and the power of moral suasion. But how shall they be employed ? It has been supposed, that the formation of societies, some for abolition and some for colonization is the best way ; but the abolitionist has no right to emancipate, and the colonizationist is utterly unable to export, the slaves at the south. Such societies may distribute information, and should this be done in the spirit of Christ, a salutary influence may be exerted. As to political organizations, and the spirit of faction, and strife between abolitionist and colonizationist, they are more likely to produce confusion than any thing else. The gospel gives no promise or guarantee of success to such organizations or to such a spirit.

In order to exert an efficient influence on the minds of others, we must either gain their confidence, or bring the power of a correct and salutary public opinion to bear upon them. The latter never can be created and permanently sustained, but through the influence of christianity, and christianity is to be learned, not in voluntary associations, but in the bible, and "the living epistle," the life and spirit of Christ's followers. So that ultimately we fall back to first principles, and must seek to exert an influence by acting according to the precepts, and breathing the spirit of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

If christians at the south, could be brought to look at this subject, and notwithstanding the numerous and great embarrassments under which they labor, be induced for the sake of a good conscience, to give up the practice of keeping slaves, their example would exert a powerful influence, and they could speak to their fellow citizens, more forcibly than we at the north can do. To secure such a result, we must not denounce every professing christian at the south who holds slaves, as a robber, a thief, a man stealer, and hurl against him opprobrious epithets. Nor must we threaten, and seek to drive them in mass out of the church, and cut them off by any sudden and violent disciplinary acts. But we should rather try to hold on to our christian brethren at the south, show that we feel for them, and for the slaveholder too, as well as for the slave, and by winning their confidence and esteem get them

to open their ears to our arguments and remonstrances, and put away the evil from among them.

This is not to be done by bitter invective, biting sarcasm, angry denunciation, nor even by fulminating the menaces of heaven. Nor is it to be done by doing any thing which would excite the slave, rouse him to madness, or render him discontented and vindictive. Paul's remonstrances with Philemon, should be our model, and by appeals and arguments presented in that spirit, as opportunity offers, in our church courts, or in social intercourse, the heart may be more effectually reached than by combinations and conspiracies, as they too often misapprehend and call our attempts to enlighten public opinion.

Moreover it behooves us to beware how we directly or indirectly take part in the profit or advantages accruing from this system. We must keep ourselves clear, and let it be seen that we act conscientiously and not from the spirit of hostility, and cheerfully forego and renounce all profit to be derived directly, or indirectly, by participating in it.

It is of essential consequence too, that in pleading the cause of the slave, we should do it in such way, as not to make or authorize the impression that we are the slaveholder's enemy, and do not sympathize with him nor feel the dangers and embarrassment of his condition, from which the action of the legislative authorities of his State can only fully liberate him.

Great care too is necessary, that no ground of objection or suspicion should be furnished, that the union of these States is not appreciated by us, and an indifference felt with regard to its perpetuation. God in his providence has blessed us above the nations of the earth, with a form of government, and free institutions eminently adapted to promote our highest happiness and prosperity as a nation. Whatever defects we may think there may be yet in our confederacy, and however we may fear that slavery is a fruitful source of evils, which impair the efficiency of our free institutions, there are other methods of securing their correction, without becoming disorganizers, and breaking down the great bulwark of the constitution, reared by our fathers, to bind in one splendid confederacy, so many free and happy States. Whatever may be said about associations and pledges, each one must here act for himself and decide according to the dictates of his own conscience; but all attempts at vituperation, at forcing men with measures of human policy, and setting up tests of character and terms of communion of man's invention, or which Jesus Christ has not instituted, are alike un congenial with the spirit of freedom and christianity.

In conclusion, it is our obvious duty to make the subject a matter of prayer. The poor and needy and oppressed, and as such the wretched slaves, have claims on our sympathies, and we should feel it both our privilege and honor to be suppliants at the throne of grace on their behalf. God has the hearts of men in his hand, and he can turn them as rivers of waters are turned. He can dispose the slaveholder to do that which is just and right. He also can order his providence so as to make that easy which now seems difficult, and make emancipation in the south, as practicable, safe and easy, as he has done in other places. Instead of reproach and invective, or quarrelling with our neighbors and friends about measures, we had better try the energy of prayer. God has saved nations in answer to the prayers of his people. He can save us from all the evils which threaten us, and will if sought to by his people. But if we lose sight of our dependance upon him, and resort to measures of human policy, and place our reliance there, he will disappoint our hopes and leave us in confusion.